

3980

THE BEING of GOD

Proved, from
The Universal Voice of Conscience,
As deliver'd in

a Monthly Lecture

AT
EDINBURGH,

By *William Cockburn*, A. M.

A
Presbyter of the CHURCH

OF
SCOTLAND.

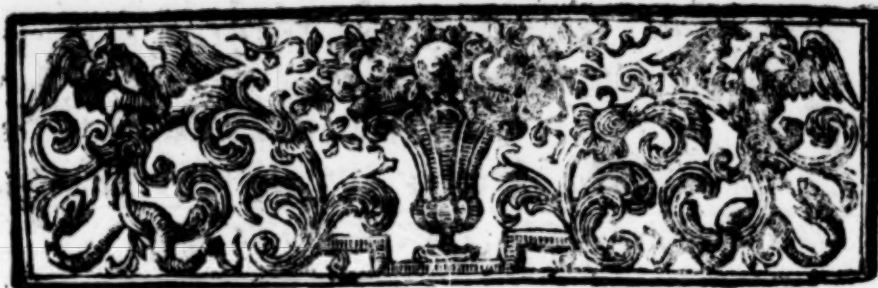
In omnium animis Deorum notionem impressit ipsa natura ; quæ est enim gens, aut quod genus Hominum, quod non habet sine doctrina anticipationem quandam Deorum, quam appellat Προληψιν Epicurus ? Cicero de nat. Deorum, Lib. I. Deos esse inter alia sic colligimus, quod omnibus de Diis opinio insita sit. Seneca, Epist. 17.

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ERRATA.

PAge 4. line 23. for *Notion*, read *Nation*,
p. 12. l. 5. for *defended*, r. *defeated*, p. 21.
l. 18. for *their*, r. *his*, p. 23. l. 9. for *Encourage-*
ments, r. *Enjoyments*. p. 25. l. 9. for *oul*, r. *Soul*,
p. 27. l. 5. for *hurrying*, r. *hungry*.





To the Honourable
Sir Arthur Aitcheson
 OF
 MARKET-HILL in IRELAND,
 Knight and Baronet of NOVA
 SCOTIA.

SIR,

HAVING frequently had the Honour of your agreeable Conversation, and perceiving that you wish for nothing more than the Promotion of the Christian Religion, and the true Interest of this your Country, for moulding the tender Hearts of Youth, in an awful Veneration of a Supreme Being,

iv DEDICATION.

ing, that they may be rightly trained up for the Service of God, and the Good of their Country; I have thought it proper to shelter one of my Essays this Way, under your Patronage.

HERE you will perceive, that the Authors who have insisted upon the Proof of a Deity, have only by the By, touched upon the Topick of Conscience, now largely treated of, which I submit to your Judgment; and the more chearfully, because I know that you have accurately studied the Law of Nature, which lays a good Foundation for acquiring the Knowledge of Theology, and the Civil and Municipal Laws.

I was exceeding glad to see your Country-men here, so unanimously entertaining you with all the Marks of Civility and Affection, that were due to a Gentleman of your Birth and personal Merit, who is descended from Illustrious Predecessors, who, in Scotland, filled with Applause the high Stations of Secretary of State, and General of the Royal Mint.

DEDICATION. v.

*IN Testimony of the Pleasure that the
Clan of Cockburns enjoy, in having so
fine a Gentleman for their Relation, I
heartily dedicate this Performance to
you, and am, with the profoundest Re-
spect,*

Sir,

Your most humble and most obedient Servant.

WILL. COCKBURN:

*Edinburgh, August
18th, 1726.*



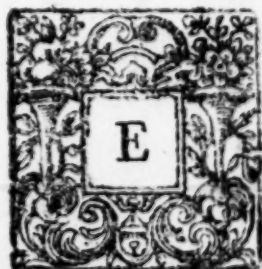
Rom.



Rom. CHAP. II. v. 14, 15.

For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another.

Their Conscience also bearing Witness.



VERY particular Person hath a Remembrancer in himself, as a sufficient Testimony of his Creator, Lord and Judge. There is a great Force of Conscience in all Men, by which their Thoughts

Thoughts are ever accusing or excusing them; they feel a Comfort in those virtuous Actions, which they find themselves to have wrought according to this Rule, imprinted upon their Mind by the divine Hand; by which also they feel a Sting and secret Remorse for all impious Machinations and vicious Acts: Therefore, I look upon that Witness, which God hath left to himself, and his own Being, as one of the most convincing Arguments for his Existence. This is so safe, and so sure a Way to bring us to God, that unless we had seen him Face to Face, nothing could have possibly given us a clearer Evidence of the Being of a God, and of the Relation our own Beings have to him, than this hath done. How noble is the Understanding Faculty of Man, in which God hath established the Knowledge of himself, and by which Man determines his Actions and his Condition, in Reference to a superior Being? For, Conscience passes a continual Judgment upon all a Man does, with Reference to God, whereby he endeavours, (when Conscience is rightly informed) to conform

form his Will to the divine Pleasure. So certain is that Saying in my Text, *Their Consciences also bearing Witness, either to accuse or excuse.* Waving then (at present) any Discourse upon the Law of Nature stamped upon our Souls, till I come in due Time to shew the Origin of Laws; I shall endeavour *First* to prove, that our Consciences indicate a God. *Secondly*, For further Confirmation of my Position, I shall answer the Objections brought by the Atheists, against the very Being of a Conscience. *Thirdly*, I shall wind up all, with some practical and profitable Inferences. 1st. then, That our Consciences indicate a God.

The firm Belief of a God, who will reward Man in a future State with Happiness, or punish them with Misery, is the great Weight or Spring that sets a going these two Principles of Human Activity, the Hopes and Fears of Men, and is in its Nature, so fitted to raise the Passions to that Degree, that did not Experience shew us the contrary, one would think it morally impossible for Human Nature to resist the Force of it; only Men not being
able

able to reconcile their wicked Practice with such Principles as these ; they banish as much as they can, these thoughts, and commence Infidels in spite of their Knowledge, and that in their own Defence, that their Consciences may not perpetually rate them, and fly in their Faces.

Can we then suppose this great Wheel of the Understanding should move in us a Concern for pleasing God, and corresponding to his blessed Will, for dread of future Punishment ? Can we imagine this, without acknowledging a first Mover ? Can we suppose that Conscience moves about nothing moves in vain ? Whence could this Principle in Man come ? We find it written in fair Characters all the World over. God (says the eloquent Orator Cicero †) *Hath imprinted on all Mens Minds the Notion of a Deity, and there is no Notion or Kind of Men in the World, that have not some Kind of anticipating Thoughts of a God, without being taught any such Thing.* With this Sen-
B . timent,

† *de Natur. Deorum.*

timent, the Philosopher *Seneca* † agrees, who gathers the Existence of a God, from that connatural Perswasion which is to be found in all Men, concerning such a Being.

This is confirmed, by considering, that Man sees nothing here, but what is inferior to him, and under his Jurisdiction. If God had not been above, there could never have been any such Thing as Fear and Conscience below.. There could never have been an Universal Fear of an invisible Nothing, in all rational Creatures. God and Conscience have a perfect Relation, in so far as, the latter depends upon, and has continually in all its Doings, a Respect and Regard to the other. How is it possible to believe, a Distinction of Good and Evil, or a Conscience about them, should be naturally inherent in every Man, as we find it is, unless some superior Power had made us, and fix'd such Principles in us, by our first Constitution, that gave us Notice of future Rewards and Punishments? How comes
it

† *Ep. 17.*

it to pass, that Good is preferred before Evil, when Man's Inclinations are more prone to Wickedness than Goodness? The Reason is obvious, because God (in our very Frame,) hath determined these Things, and left an indelible Testimony in our Souls about them. For Conscience is felt within every one's Breast, and every one is conscious of its Motions and Effects. Is it not customary in all Actions, for Men to appeal to their Consciences, even when erroneous? Conscience in general, is nothing else, but our practical Judgment, directing us what we ought to do, and what to avoid, approving or reproving us, according as we follow its Directions, or run counter to them. The Conscience therefore is good or bad, conform to the Directions which it gives, for the Government of our Lives. It is called by the divine Philosopher *Plato*, *The Charioteer*, *the great Guide and Governor of Man*. By *Antoninus*, *The President and Leader*; all which Epithets, declare the divine Wisdom impressed upon the Soul. So

great (says Cicero,) (a) is the Power of Conscience, that those who have committed any Fault, live in perpetual Fear of Punishment. In this Opinion, Plutarch, (b) Seneca, (c) and Juvenal, (d) do all concur.

Can we believe, that all the Exercises of Conscience, in the Hopes and Fears we find fixed in them, about a future State, to be mere Delusions, which they are, if there is no God? The *Atheist* himself, with all his Skill, cannot disband his own Fears, nor run away from his own Conscience, no more than he can run a way from himself; he finds Seasons when he smarts under the Lashes of it; for tho' he should retire into the remotest Seas; tho' he should traverse the wildest Deserts and Mountains, yet Conscience will constantly haunt and dog him at the Heels. Men are full of Exercises of Conscience about Things not punishable in this World, nor any Way discernible here, for in every Step they take

(a) *Orat. pro Mil.* (b) *p. 556. ed. Par.* (c) *Ep. 97.* (d) *Satyr. 13.*

take in evil Courses, they are their own Tormentors and Executioners. Whither? no where can the *Athiest* flee from himself, to find Shelter against the Force of God's Vicegerent; if he should take Wings and fly to the uttermost Parts of the Earth, there it will find him; if he should ascend into Heaven, there it will accost and arraign him; if he should descend into Hell, there God's Remembrancer will seize and torment him, by calling to Mind his wicked Deeds, that will prey upon, and gnaw his fretted Conscience.

Even here it is the Fate of Tyrants, Persecutors, Murderers, and other enormous Offenders, to be gnawed and tormented with their Conscience. *Tiberius* was his own Tormentor for his flagitious Acts. *Let (e) the Divine Powers* (as he writes to the Senate) *torment me worse, if they can, than I am daily cruciated.* *Suetonius (f)* relates, that *Nero* was haunted with his Mother's Ghost, and with the Lashes and Tortures of Furies. This timorous Consciousness
made

(e) *Tacit. l. 6. c. 6.* (f) *in Vit.*

made *Caligula* start out of his Bed, and hide himself under it, as often as it thundred. That Emperor who would be called a God, was afraid of that divine Voice; tho' he was pictured with a Thunder-bolt, yet he dreaded the true Thunderer.

For Conscience cannot but inform all Men, that there is a God, who ought to be dreaded, and had in Reverence, to whom all are accountable for their Doings.

St. *Paul* appeals to the Conscience of the Heathens, for the Worship of a Deity. *You have* (says he to the *Athenians*) *erected an Altar to the unknown God* †. This clearly demonstrates, that you own by the Light of Nature, a supreme Being who governs all Things, but you worship you know not what, whom therefore you ignorantly worship, him I declare unto you; God that made the World, and all Things therein; so that whithersoever you cast your Eyes, you shall discern legible Characters of a Divinity impressed

† *Acts* 17, 23.

sed upon all the Creatures. This cannot but inform your Consciences, of the great Creator of all Things. Neither is he far from every one of us, *for in Him we live, move and have a Being*; As certain also some of your own Poets have said, *For we are his Off spring*. From this innate Notion of their Poet, which they all owned and embraced, he takes Occasion to reprove them for their Idolatry. Forasmuch then, as we are the Off-spring of God, we ought not to think, that the Godhead is like unto Gold and Silver, or Stone graven by Art and Man's Device. For if we, who are only the Images of God, do live, reason and perform great Exploits, much more Life, Knowledge, Wisdom and Power, even infinite and eternal, belong to God our Creator, from whom we derive all the Beauties, Excellencies, and Perfections that shine in us. The learned Luminary of the *English Church*, Bishop. *Pearson*, (g) agrees with me in this my Exposition and Inference, from what the Apostle

(g) upon 1st. Artic. of the Creed

file philosophically Reasons with the Athenians ; and he adds, *That the Notice of a God, calls us to our Knees, and shews the humblest of our Devotions, to be but just and loyal Retributions.*

That the Heathens from their Conscience, entertained a Notion of a Deity, appears from their solemn Sacrifices and Prayers, especially in Time of Distress, that they might obtain Relief from an Almighty Power, and Success in all their Enterprizes. So true is that Expression of *Isaiah* †, which all Mankind owned, *That the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary. There is no searching of his Understanding. He giveth Power to the Faint, and to them that have no Might, he encreaseth strength. Even the youths shall be faint and not be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not*

† C. 40, V. 28.

not faint. This is the Voice and Language of Conscience in all Nations, who considering the Instability of human Affairs, and that even greater Powers were defended, and overpowered by a lesser Force, all the Earth could not but acknowledge, that God by his Providence reigned in the World, and disposed of Crowns and Sceptres to whom he would; and which is intimated in the 18th Chapter of *Jeremiah*, Vers. 6. This innate Idea of a Deity, persuaded the very Heathens to make humble Application to the Oracles of their several Deities, for Advice in all their Undertakings and Difficulties.

From hence it may be demonstrated, that there is somewhat in all Mens Natures, which administers present Comfort and Satisfaction to our Minds from good Actions, as also firm Hopes, or Presages of a future Happiness, as a Reward (from the Author of all Good) for them, when this Life is ended. Whereas, on the other Side, the greatest Misery and most dismal Fears do proceed from evil Actions, from whence the Conscience seems furnished, as it
C were,

were, with Whips and Scorpions, to correct and punish all Enormities. So that it may from hence appear, that Men are not deluded in their moral Notions, either by Clergymen or Politicians, in Relation to their Acknowledgment of a Deity, who will summon them to an after Reckoning, before his Seat of Judgment. For Actions contrary to the Dictates of right Reason, or a well informed Conscience, when ever these come to be duly reflected on by the Doer, must needs, thro' their own Turpitude and Unreasonableness, often make him highly displeased and angry with himself, whereby he loses the great Happiness of Life, namely, that Self-satisfaction, which springs from the Reflection of the Mind upon its Actions, when agreeable to the Rules of Reason, as the Satyrist † *Juvenal* handsomely expresses it; *Whatever Impiety is committed by a bad Precedent, is disgusting even to the Author of it.*

Whilst

† Satyr 13. — *Exemplo quodcunque malo committitur, ipsi displicet Authori.*

Whilst an Offender continues in a lamentable State of wilful Rebellion against God, he cannot but almost constantly be tormented with a dreadful Remorse of Conscience, proceeding from a Fear of Punishment, to be inflicted by a Holy and Just God. This Dread seldom fails to torment the Souls of wicked Men, as the forecited Poet sets forth: This (says ‡ he,) is the first Stroak of Vengeance, that no Criminal is acquitted, even himself being Judge.

Now, all this may demonstrate to us, that the Being of a supreme Deity is clearly proven from the universal Voice of Conscience. But for the further Confirmation of this Position, I proceed,

In the 2^d place, to Answer the Objections brought by the *Atheists*, against the very Being of a Conscience; so that if there be no Conscience, consequently there is no universal innate Idea of a God.

C 2

The

‡ *Prima est hac ultio, quod se judice nemo nocens absolvitur.*

The first Objection is, That what is called Conscience, is nothing but ridiculous Fear, habituated by Tales about invisible Things.

To this I answer, That Conscience could never be begotten in Men, by any human Contrivance, because, it never can be confined within any human Bounds. Other Men are so far from having the Power over another's Conscience, that a Man cannot govern his own, for it gives its Evidence, whether he likes it or not. The Work of Conscience is often exerted in opposing one's self, in the violent Emanations of his own Will. If it had been at the first created by invented Fictions, or the Craft of Politicians, these would have terminated it, wherever the Truth was revealed, and the Cheat discovered. But let Men say as long as they will, There is no God, Conscience will still abide and upbraid them, for their abominable Devices and Works. For (as I have already shewn) the Lashes of Conscience have not escaped Men of the greatest Power, who could have defied the Infliction of human Punishments,

ments, and lived arbitrarily, without the least Controul, in gratifying their Lusts and brutal Passions.

Conscience descends from a more noble Original than human Artifice and Policy; for it was born with Man, before Law-givers and Politicians existed, and always had noble and real Effects upon Mankind, for their Good and Advantage: Tho' no one was privy to *Cain's* murdering his Brother, who was it but Conscience that made him cry out, *My Punishment is sorer than I can bear, every one that sees me will kill me?* It is thought by Commentators, that the Mark put upon him, was a pannick Fear and Trembling, occasioned, no doubt, from the Terror of his Conscience, an usual Consequence of so black a Crime.

This inward Monitor frequently lays an Arrest upon Men; it restrains them from open as well as secret Evil and Injustice; It provokes them to do, (and gives them Satisfaction in doing) whatever is upright and just. Therefore the Pleasure and Troubles that it occasions, can never arise from a mere Lie, so as to lay a Foundation of Certainty among

among Mankind, and to be universally received as an infallible Truth. For Men every where find the Workings of Conscience so real, that they produce Perplexities, which the whole World cannot remove ; *a wounded Conscience who can bear ?* Again, they create such Peace and Satisfaction in Men, that neither the World nor themselves, by any other Workings of their own Souls, could lead themselves into. A good Conscience is a perpetual Feast, which all the various Pleasures of the World cannot furnish, since all here is but *Vanity of Vanities, and vexation of Spirit*. This Consideration must needs insure us, that there is an Intercourse between God and our Consciences, and that it hath a peculiar Derivation from, and Relation to him, and is not begotten by a slavish subjected Credulity to vain imposed Phantoms, and empty Nothings. Indeed, I own that the Conscience may be erroneous ; but this confirms, and nowise destroys this inward Principle. Thus, tho' Men fall into the thickest Darkness, about the Object and Manner of

Wor-

Worship, yet the Principle of Conscience and Worship still remains; and tho' the Worship is directed to false Gods, yet this still shews, that the whole World acknowledges a Deity, worthy of the highest Veneration, who governs all Things, and will reward or punish Men in a future State, conform to the Goodness or Malignity of their Actions..

Secondly, It is objected, that all Men are not troubled with this we call Conscience; for many have no such Thing, nor find any Workings of it in themselves, consequently, that this Principle is not universal.

To this I answer, That it is not requisite, that every Universal should be made up of each individual Particular. If there be Fools who say, *There is no God, that they are conscious of*; if there be some Ideots and Madmen in the World, should not Mankind in general be denominated Rational? Tho' some are born Blind, yet Eye-sight (I hope) is universal. For universal Consent lies in that true Proportion it bears to the universal Reason of the World,
in-

including either the greater or better Part of Mankind. That some wicked Men, either foolishly ignorant, or perversely peevish, have denyed the plainest, either moral or divine, Truths, does not destroy the Universality thereof, nor their Reasonableness. Foolish Men may deny what they please, but we feel Motion in them, tho' one denyed it ; and the Philosopher confuted him by walking. Just so do the *Atheists* deny Qualms of Conscience ; but I appeal to their Humanity, that is not void of Reason, calling them to an account for their Actions. No ridiculous Thing has ever sprung into the World, but that it has some Authors. *Aristotle* † tells us, *There were some that affirmed a Thing might be, and might not be at the same Time.* Did that any Way overthrow the Generality of that Maxim in Reason, that nothing was possible and impossible at the same Time. *Cicero*, (i) likewise acquaints us, *That nothing could be so absurd, that had not some Philosophers* for

† *Metaph. B. 4. C. 4. (i) De Nat. Deor*

for its Patron.. Suppose a Man has debauched himself into so great a Sottishness, that he has no use of Reason; suppose a Man has lived so long, that he dotes and is Childish, will any say therefore, that Reason is not an universal Principle? If the *Atheists* say, These Things happen upon particular Accidents, so, say I, does the other, if ever any such Thing happens. Where will you find a Man without some Conscience? But suppose a Man, by God's particular Permission, has for a Time extinguished the Exercise of that Principle, and has taken much Pains to bear it, Does that argue, that there never was in him such a Principle as Conscience? Or, does it not rather establish the Truth of it? The *Atheists* will often tell you, *That what Men call Conscience, is nothing but Melancholy and morose Thoughts, arising from peevish Humours.* But it may be strongly presumed, he finds some Image of it in himself, that makes him able so to Nick-name it in others. Let any the most professed *Atheist* tell me, Whether ever he got for any Time, rid of his Conscience, without being at some

Trouble to oppose it? Let him dress it up as he will, and oppose it under what Notion he pleases? Yet it is evident, he landed in this World with such a Principle, and he can never suffice it, but that it may revive. Let any Man intoxicate himself, yet his Reason will have a Resurrection. He cannot immerge that Principle, unless he drown his Being. When he awakes, he will find he is a Man, tho' he contributed what he could by the Fumes of strong Drink to make himself a Beast, to throw off Reason and Conscience that checked him for his atrocious Crimes, and monstrous Infidelity. But when Sleep has dissipated the intoxicating Spirits, their awakened Conscience will recoil with double Force, to gall and torment him, by representing in their ghastly and dire Shapes all the Furies of Hell, all the armed Terrors and Artillery of an incensed God, that are ready to be discharged upon his wicked Head, and to tumble Soul and Body into an Abyss of eternal Fire and Brimstone. The *Roman* Emperors, who triumphed most in pretending Atheism, (threatning the Wind and the Clouds) betray'd upon every small Occasion the dread-
fullest

fullest Fears imaginable. *Julian* the Apostate, was at last forc'd to cry out, *O Galilean ! thou hast overcome me* The great Hector of the *Greeks*, *Epicurus* himself, was the most eminent Coward that ever breathed, in those Things he most defied, nothing frightened any Man more, than these two Things did him, Death and the Gods, as *Cicero* reports. His Atoms had not solv'd his Conscience, nor cured him, it seems of his Fears, he was certain of them, tho' he bottomed all the World upon Chance. How many are to be seen daily, that when they think they have safely interr'd their Conscience, when they come to an Extremity, soon find a Revival of it again ? Man cannot totally obliterate his Conscience, unless it be in some very extraordinary Case, where, as a signal Judgment of God, it is extinguished ; for it is the great Trustee for God in the World, and naturally distinguishes between Good and Evil. This is the great Means by which God will judge the world. He will deal with Men according to their Light, when the Consciences of Men shall perform that great Office of accusing or excusing in the Great Day of Accounts.

From what has been said, I shall draw some profitable Inferences.

i. I cannot suppose a rational Man, without the Impressions and Apprehensions of a Deity, tho' he struggles to smother the Checks of Conscience, that he may give full swing to his Lusts, and swim in all Manner of intemperate Pleasures by leading an impious Life,

neither denying one Lust, nor the least Importunity of sinful Desires. Tho' wicked Men may put on an Air of chearfulness, yet they only act in Disguise, while they carry Guilt about them. In the midst of such constrained Jollity, there is nothing but Madness and Folly. *Eccles. vii. 3.* Melancholy Thoughts will disturb their seeming Happiness and Encouragements, but a Man that is at Peace with God, himself and his Neighbours, has nothing to fear, nothing to interrupt their Delights. All the fading Glories of this deceitful Earth, cannot procure such inward Joy, as spring from the Complacency of a Mind, in living up to the Order and Perfection of his Nature, directed by Reason and Grace.

2. I am convinc'd, that the practical Atheist, who really professes the Belief of a God, and the Admonitions of Conscience, and yet acts contrary to his Belief; I am convinc'd, (I say) that such a one does not only great Prejudice to Religion, by bad Example, but will encrease his own Condemnation.

3. *There are others again, who are not so profligate, but as to the main, lead Lives suitably to the Christian Doctrine: But let me ask such, if, when ever they sin against Conscience, do they immediately bewail their Guilt, repent and amend? Do they always examine their Conscience, by the Rule of natural and revealed Religion? O Christians! Do you believe in God? Does your awakened Conscience discover the brightness of his divine Majesty, and the Terrors of his Justice? Why then are not all your Actions*

Actions squared according to his blessed Will? Why do you not keep your Consciences pure and undefiled; void of Offence towards God and Man? Why are you guilty of deliberate presumptuous Sins, that will bring down the Vengeance of God, if they are not forsaken, by Contrition and an upright Life? Remember, that when you act contrary to the Honour of your Sovereign, you in Effect deny his Authority, and his Power. Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not these things which I say? Not every one, &c. || If you profess that you know God, but in Works deny him, how abominable, how disobedient are you, and unto every good Work reprobate?

4. *Let then a Consciousness of no habitual Wickedness, be your Brazen Wall and Armor of Defence, against the Wiles of the Devil. Put on the whole Armor of God, by adorning the Doctrine of Christ with a suitable Conversation. Repent ye of your Sins, that they may be blotted out when the Times of refreshing shall come from the Presence of the Lord. Reverence your Consciences, and stand in awe of them, having a great Regard to their Testimony and Verdict. For if your hearts condemn you not; then have you confidence towards God. For Conscience is a domestick Judge, and next to the supreme Majesty of Heaven and Earth. Every Man should be afraid to offend his own Conscience, which, when ever he knowingly does amiss, will severely lash him. There is certainly no such Comfort under the Evils and Afflictions of this Life,*

as

as a faithful Witness in our Breasts, of our own Innocency

5. Pray take care not to harden your Consciences, by making Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience, lest God should forsake you, and render your Consciences scar'd as with a hot Iron: thus past all Feeling and then God may justly swear, That you shall not enter into his Rest.

6. Would you never be afflicted in soul, (k) then live well. Would you not be afraid of your Conscience, do that which is good, and you shall have Praise of the same. Wouldst thou get rid of a wounded Conscience, Pray then get rid of your Sins: and God will fill your Souls with the blessed Fruits of Love, Joy and Peace. As at the Hour of Death, nothing dejects a Man's Spirit more, than the Terror of a guilty Conscience, so nothing exhilarates the Spirits more, than the Conscience of a holy and good Life, which hath brought Glory to God, and Good to Men. A comfortable Death, free from the Stings and Upbraidings, the Terror and Tortures, the Confusions and Amazings of a guilty Conscience, is a Happiness so desirable, as to be well worth the best Care and Endeavour of a Man's whole Life. He can with Courage and Faith look Death in the Face, and commit his Soul to God in well doing, as into the Hands of a faithful Creator and merciful Redeemer, triumphing with St. Paul, I've fought the, &c.

7. But alas, the Man who regards neither God, nor the Voice of his Conscience, hath a most dismal Prospect before him of the final Event of all. When
ever

over he casts his Eye beyond this present Scene of Things, wherein his Mind is tossed too and fro in such infinite Uncertainties; there he sees nothing but dismal Horrors and Tragedy nothing but Dark-ness, Wretchedness, and Despair; nothing but Anguish to his Mind; nothing to accompany him but Devils and damned Ghosts. Whilst he is walking thro' this short Inclosure of Time, at every step he feels himself pricked by his own Cares, Fears, and Anxieties, which like Briars grow round him; and when he looks over the Pale into the vast Field of Eternity, there he sees nothing but dire and horrid Spectacles; nothing but burning Wrath and Vengeance to persecute him to eternal Ages.

8. But he who makes his Conscience his Guide, has always good Weather within, and a clear Sky about him; he acts conformable to his Duty, and worthy of himself. Now being thus crowned with the Applauses of his own Conscience, he goes triumphantly on thro' all the Difficulties of Life, waiting for an Eternal Reward in the Glories that shall be revealed. The Sense of his own Integrity raises him to a glorious Hope, whereon like Moses, he stands on the Top of Pisgah, surveying the heavenly Canaan, whose fruitful Soil abounds with every good, and flows with everlasting Pleasure. He sees that the Labour of his Love will be rewarded with endless Rest and Felicity. With the Prospective of his Faith and Hope, he beholds Angels and Saints with Crowns of Glory on their Heads, calling to him to make haste thither, and come into the joyous Participation of their happy Society. This glorious Expectation makes him go on thro' all the weary

many Stages of this Life, with a courageous Mind, this makes him steadfast and immoveable in the Works of the Lord, &c. For he sees the Accomplishment of all his Hopes, in the Enjoyment of all those Delights that his vast hurrying Desires can crave, or swallow to eternal Ages.

9. As then you tender your own Ease and Security, temporal and eternal, be persuaded to lead the remainder of your Lives by a sincere Conscience, regulated by Reason and Religion, which will not only extricate you from the greatest Difficulties and Perplexities of this Life, but also crown you with immortal Ease and Happiness in the Life to come.

10. Finally, Will your Consciences be Witnesses for or against you in the last Day? Be persuaded then, to lead such pious Lives, as that your Consciences may rejoice, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, you have had your Conversation in the World. Then the Testimony of your Conscience, that will acquit you before God, Men and Angels, will be most refreshing and ravishing. But if you have neglected the Duties of Religion, that necessarily arises from the Being of the most High and Great God; then before the last awful Tribunal, your Conscience will quake and accuse you of not listening to her Admonitions and Knowledge. How pungent and deplorable the Accusation will be, I need not insist upon; only this Consideration should warn us all to live up to the divine Precepts, to obey a rightful Conscience, which will bring us divine Consolation here, and Peace at the last, in the glorious Fruition of the beatifick Vision in eternal Happiness and Glory, thro' Jesus Christ, &c. Amen.

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